

New York Tribune.

First to Last—the Truth: News—Editorials—Advertisements.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 1915.

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Food Contraband and the Wilhelmina Case.

There can be no reasonable dissent from Sir Edward Grey's main argument in his note of Friday in reference to the Wilhelmina case. The British Foreign Secretary admits that up to the present Great Britain has not actually declared contraband food supplies forwarded to Germany from a neutral nation and intended exclusively for the use of the civilian population. He therefore fully concedes the propriety of the inquiries made by this government on behalf of the owners of the Wilhelmina's cargo.

That cargo would not have been detained, Sir Edward Grey intimates, except for the change in the situation created by the decree of the German Federal Council of January 25 last. The Federal Council ordered the taking over by the German government of all grain and foodstuffs then in Germany. It also directed that grain and flour imported into Germany after January 31 should be deliverable only to agencies under governmental control. That order played directly into Great Britain's hand by obscuring, if not obliterating, the normal distinction between food imports intended for the use of civilians and those intended for the use of the military.

Subsequently, when the full effect of the order was realized, it was repealed so far as to allow food imports to come in consigned to private individuals or firms. The government, moreover, pledged itself to guarantee, under neutral supervision, the distribution of the imported supplies to civilian consumers. But the value and practicability of this guarantee remain open to question. The decree in itself certainly modified the contraband status of foods sent into Germany. The British government is therefore fully justified in asking a prize court to decide how far the ostensible exemption of imported supplies clears Germany of the charge of having set up a general government monopoly of foodstuffs.

The United States does not dispute Great Britain's right to carry into her prize courts all questions relating to trade in contraband. If the prize courts give decisions which do not satisfy us, we still have a recourse in diplomatic protest and arbitration. As a neutral, we demand nothing more than an observance of the existing rules of international law. We have warned Germany that we expect such treatment in case American ships continue to travel through the so-called "war zone" to British ports, as they have a perfect right to do. We count on Great Britain for an equally loyal acknowledgment of neutral rights.

As Sir Edward Grey suggests, British opinion has been sorely tried by the many violations of the rules of war of which Germany has been guilty. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake from the broader view of national honor and policy for Great Britain to consider lowering herself to Germany's level. The closing paragraph of the Wilhelmina note seems to suggest that Great Britain may decide to treat the existing international code as partially or wholly abrogated because of German practices. Great Britain is fully entitled to take measures of reprisal directed against Germany. But so far as neutrals are concerned, there should be no abrogation of the existing rules of international law by either belligerent. Each government ought to be glad to let the other bear alone the odium of a deliberate disregard of neutral rights. Neutral nations whose legitimate interests are disregarded cannot be expected to accept as an excuse from either belligerent the charge that the other broke the law of nations first.

To Speed Up the Administration of the Criminal Law.

The Committee on Criminal Courts of the Charity Organization Society is again urging legislation to improve conditions in the inferior criminal courts, similar to its bill of last year, which the Legislature failed to enact. This is a carefully worked out measure, drawn after long study of the operations of the magistrates' courts. It would do away with the double trial now existing in cases where magistrates after examination hold persons for trial on misdemeanor charges, and through this and its other reform provisions would save the city much money and produce great improvement through the abolition of delay in criminal law administration.

This measure would consolidate the magistrates' courts and the Court of Special Sessions, conferring on the judges of each court the powers now possessed by the judges of the other. It would not disturb the term of any official. It would enable the magistrates to try cases in which now they may only examine witnesses and hold the prisoner for trial later—maybe weeks later, during which time he must be cared for at the city's expense if he is not out on bail. It proposes to retain the district courts, the Domestic Relations Court and the night courts for men and women just as at present. It proposes to create a Municipal Division, for the trial of cases in which the city departments are complainants, and to make the Children's Court a separate court, presided over by a board of four or more judges, with a chief judge.

The Municipal Division would be a boon to city officials. They could know that their cases were on calendars not choked with other business. The

judges assigned to this work would become experts in the complicated and technical laws out of which such cases arise. There would be a great saving of the time of citizens and department employees.

In general this bill ought to speed up the law's processes and, by cutting out unnecessary ones and improving the legal machinery, make the administration of justice more satisfactory and less expensive. All these things the taxpayers and the public desire ardently. It seems a good bill to make law.

Let the City Abolish the Coroners!

Senator Cromwell's bill abolishing the coroners' system for this city is to have a hearing before the Senate Committee on the Affairs of Cities on Wednesday. There will be strong arguments presented for it, and it is to be hoped they will produce prompt and favorable action on it.

There are few arguments that can be produced against it. The chief one is that whatever is right; the coroners' system has existed for generations, so it must be right. The next in importance is that the system furnishes jobs for worthy politicians and helps the political leaders to "round out" or "balance" the ticket. These arguments may appeal to prejudice, but cannot be expected to prevail with a reasoning being over the facts brought out by Mr. Wallstein's investigation of the coroners' office here.

That proved that as administered in this city the system is faulty and inefficient, over-costly even for good results, and fosters dishonesty in spots. The city administration wants to change to a system whereby suspicious deaths are investigated by duly qualified medical examiners. Undoubtedly a large part of the public is behind the administration in its desire for this improvement. Yet the city cannot act. The matter rests with the legislators. There is no reason why they should not let the city improve its work in this respect.

The Washington Square Players' Venture.

The "little theatre" is not new, the theatre for "art only" is not new, but the combination presented in the theatrical venture now being conducted by the Washington Square Players at the Bandbox Theatre is at least unusual. Here is a theatre small enough to be "intimate," a group of actors and managers who give their services, a policy which says the only limitation on plays produced is that "they must have artistic merit," and a belief in the democratization of art which fixes an admission price of 50 cents. Here also, it is pleasant to note, is a standard of production far removed from the amateur, indeed, one which in acting and stage setting would be creditable to an older organization and one of far greater resources.

Concededly this is all experiment, an experiment in a field of endeavor which has felt the year's depression to such an extent that the public is distinctly coy regarding things theatrical. Yet in such experiments is the health of the theatre. If the American stage is ever to extend its exhibitions beyond the "tired business man" type of music show and the farces and melodramas which have been such money makers in the last couple of seasons, it will be by reason of the competition and example of such organizations as the Washington Square Players.

There is great interest these days in dramatic material which the commercial theatre will not produce—witness the increase of published plays and the sale of these volumes. Since any play worth the name lives better on the boards than between the covers of a book, that interest ought to be extended readily to such work as the Washington Square Players are doing. This is an experiment well worth watching. Whether it succeeds or fails on the financial side, it is bound to furnish stimulus and suggestion for all who are concerned with the drama.

Aid as Many as Possible!

Mr. McAneny's scheme for distribution of food from hotels and restaurants to the employees of the emergency workshops for luncheon and to take home to their families is a worthy one. It seems to fall short, though, on one point of which the planners seem especially proud. That is that it will prevent the formation of bread lines and the humiliation to the unfortunate persons who have to wait for hours to get food in that way; whereas, it will assure distribution of food to those who are willing to work.

All that is true; and this plan will mean double help, in a sense, for those few members of the great group of unemployed fortunate enough to get places in the emergency workshops. They will get their wages, small, but still desirable in an emergency, and they will get food for home consumption. Those who cannot get into the emergency workshops will get neither wages nor food. The bread lines are dreadful in their implication of suffering and their indictment of a social system which brings about such conditions.

Nevertheless, it is better, when unemployment is so widespread as it is to-day, to give a little aid to all who need it rather than to concentrate on a few lucky ones to the neglect of others. This great city ought not to be so limited in its resources and spirit of helpfulness that there could be actual destitution. Yet the fact remains that there is not money and food enough to go around among those who need help. The common sense view, therefore, is that aid should be given to as many as possible, even if the bread has to be buttered thinly.

The Value of Fraternities.

The club habit is ingrained in human nature. Wherever men have a little more than usual in common, they form a club. It is so outside of college; it is so inside. No legislation can eradicate the tendency or seriously interfere with its expression.

The State of Texas is contemplating the abolition of college fraternities, presumably because they are considered undemocratic. If they are abolished local clubs, *sub rosa* or otherwise, will spring up to take their places as surely as Texans continue to send boys to college. Colonel James B. Curtis, chairman of the Inter-Fraternity Conference, says: "The abolition of groups in universities is impossible. Were it effected it would destroy the university itself. Groups of students have existed in all universities from their beginning to the present day."

The State of Texas must choose between local, unrecognized college clubs, with no reputation to maintain and little publicity to fear, and the chapters of national bodies with well established reputations and standards. Faculties in every college where the fraternity system obtains have frequently found appeals to fraternity pride an invaluable aid in enlisting support of the student body for moral and scholarly advancement. The influence of the national council of the fraternity

is often a powerful lever to compel the reform of individual chapters. There could be no more wholesome regulation of undergraduate social life. It seems obvious that these advantages must be sacrificed with the substitution of local, unrecognized groups.

Some fraternities have traditions that are undemocratic. But most of them have a pride in their disregard of social or financial background when choosing new members. The more chapters a fraternity has the more rampant is its healthy Americanism. Fortunately, there are enough of fraternities to go 'round. No university in the country can boast a chapter of every one that exists. The remedy is not to abolish them, locally or nationally, but to encourage the multiplication of their chapters so that practically no students are without the opportunity to join one or another.

IN LAST YEAR'S CAMP.

They stole the horse's glory, they scared the foals at play. They yearned for Tipperary on every woodland way. Their tent peaks pricked the dawning, their bugles shook the dew. While the encamped Division became the men we knew.

The tents were struck at twilight, the pipers skirled a cry. The stars came out in Heaven to bid the lads goodbye. That night they took the Old Road, the straightest road that runs. Deep with the dust of armies and graven by their guns.

Now tentless lie the moorlands, the glades most lonely are; But still the russet ponies stand solemnly afar; And still I think they hearken, and know the sound of men— The marching tramp of heroes we shall not see again.

Now leave we to its glory the camp of yesterday, Vex not its echoes lightly—their souls may come this way. The lads who cut the bracken when beechen leaves were red, And ere the cuckoo's calling, were England's Deathless Dead!

M. Adair Macdonald, in The Spectator.

AMERICA'S PRACTICAL IDEALISTS

Their Attitude Toward the War in General and Germany in Particular.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: A well known German writer recently referred to us as a purely commercial nation. We began by being New Englanders and Yankees. That we know sharp bargains and drive them is true, but we are also and have always been idealists, and it has not yet been declared to us that the reasons for the present war, forced upon Europe by Germany, are not purely materialistic. We are also, as a nation, inclined to believe that it is not the purely materialistic things that triumph.

Germany is making to us a pathetic appeal that her people may be nourished and fed. We are far from her, with her quarrels and her militarism. Militarism we, as a nation, repudiate. We have so far formed the public opinion that Germany has brought the war upon the world. Our ears are ringing with the cries of the Belgians and of the Poles, for whose famine and desolation Germany is responsible.

The American people want neither disturbances nor war. We are not inflammatory, nor quick to take issue, nor are we suddenly moved. We are a big body, and when we move the effect will be proportionate. Made up, as we are, of many peoples, our voice has a peculiar richness of tone; we absorb many colors, the composite hue is deep. We are a crucible into which the varied races have been poured, but the result—though our ingredients are conglomerate—will be found to be strikingly unified.

Our press does not inflame, it reflects. Our public opinion is so strong that no government or course of events can drown the expressions of the American people.

We will protect our citizens and our commerce. Germany understands what it will mean to antagonize the United States. The question is one that reaches beyond this war time, that reaches into the future and its results to all peoples. What happens now among us all will be difficult to forget. Let Germany in her attitude toward the United States be circumspect.

Every thinking German-American regards the present situation with the intensest interest, and many discover that the American Fatherland grips them acutely. If the German Emperor, according to an ancient boast of his, is ruler over millions of Germans in the United States, let him look to how he commands and what he upholds. The question is not one of arms and ships alone. It is a question of commerce, economics and of the wealth and gain of nations. Every hour that we in America are thrown more completely upon ourselves for our manufactures and our industries, we are finding out the great importance we are to ourselves, and what our isolation means to our greater commercial self-sufficiency.

MARIE VAN VORST.

THE HUMANITARIAN HOBO

Seeking to Play His Part in the Evolution of Social Welfare.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: The Hobo tries to be honest, to be simple, to be direct. I believe that the whole trend of social evolution is toward the goal of human happiness.

The Industrial Workers of the World may get out and get a feed without paying, but this is not the process of social evolution. We have seen a great change in our economic, unemployed, social and all other conditions of life and work in New York City this winter.

The dead list of unkind and unfair treatment of the Hobo lies now before us. The real art of understanding the Hobo can only come when there is a surplus of good will accumulated.

There is no lack of resources among the Hoboes, material or spiritual, for carrying out their half in this great sociological plan of evolution. We have brains and inspiration enough. The only reason that the mill is grinding so slowly is that the miller is overworked and that the hopper is choked. We are letting a few do the work we should all be helping in.

You may talk about patriotism, but in what does it consist if not in helping our country (or city) succeed in her particular mission? Our mission—the elevation of humanity—is one in which every citizen should have a share, or he is not an American citizen in the spiritual sense. The poor must give of their little; the workingman must not seek to monopolize the labor market; and the rich must give of their plenty, their time, their culture, their wealth.

We cannot hasten evolution along this line—but we can help to make better conditions for some of those who have their little parts to play.

"Do the work that's nearest, To the thing that's nearest, To the thing that's nearest, To the thing that's nearest."

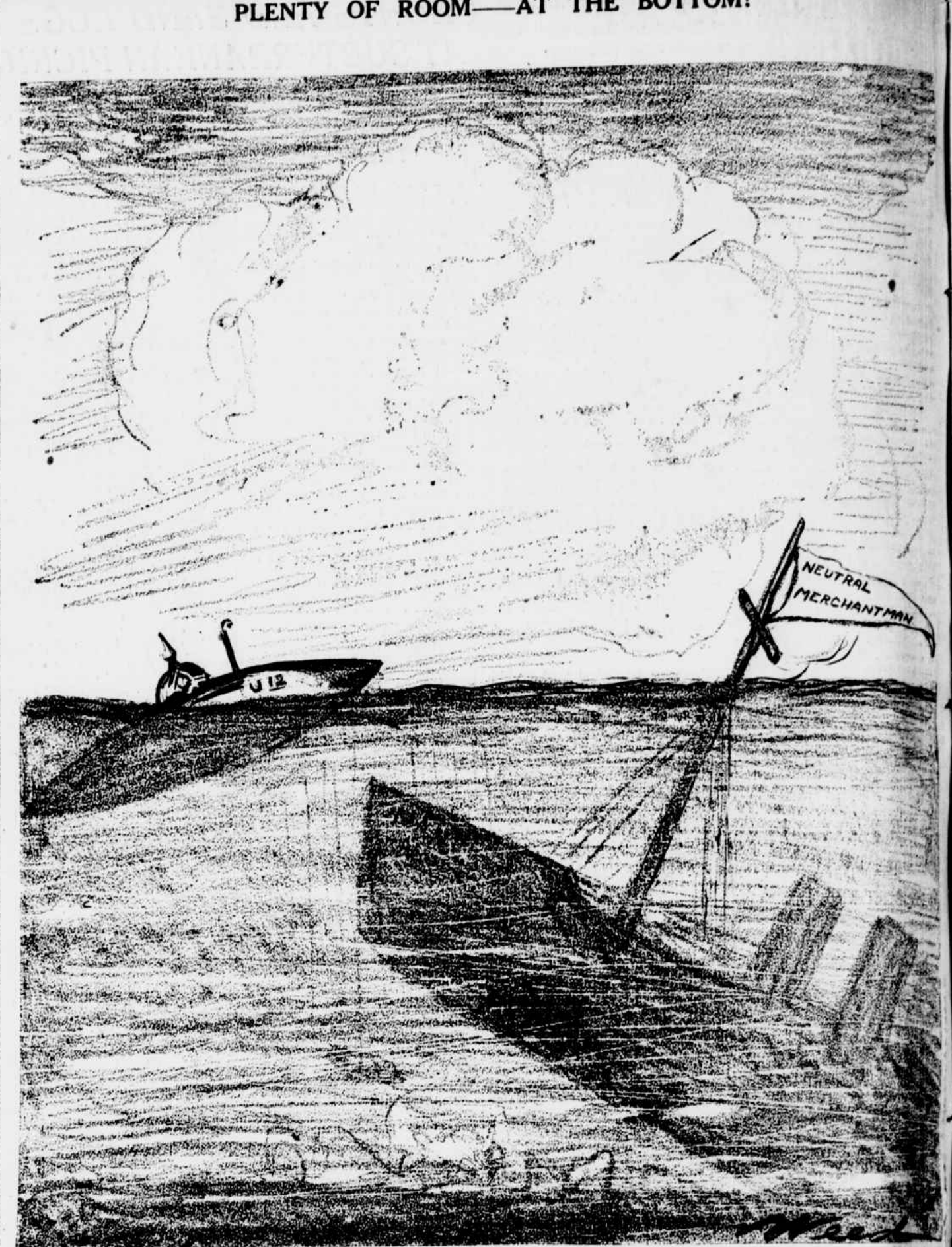
RAY WILLIAMS, "The Hobo Poet." Hotel de Gink, New York, Feb. 16, 1915.

Borrowed Time Well Used.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: At the regular semi-monthly meeting of the Borrowed Time Club held at their rooms to-day The Tribune held the place of honor. Instead of a stated address, the splendid editorial in Friday's Tribune entitled "Lincoln" was read in 1860. The members who have passed the allotted time of three score and ten years. The reading attracted close attention and was thoroughly enjoyed by all present. Many of the members are still subscribers and readers of The Tribune, some of whom began after giving their first vote for Lincoln in 1860. The Tribune editorials upon the war are often referred to and discussed by the old veterans who fought in the Civil War but are still active members of this unique club.

H. N. GILBERT.



THE PEOPLE'S COLUMN

An Open Forum for Public Debate.

LINCOLN AND "OUR KAISER"

Look for the Strawberry Mark of "Kultur."

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: On the night of Lincoln's Birthday, in introducing some interesting war pictures to the audience of a German theatre in New York, the learned "doctor" said to that audience, undoubtedly in a large proportion Americans by naturalization's oath, that "our Kaiser" is only doing precisely as Abraham Lincoln did.

Shades of Lexington and Yorktown and the signers of the Declaration of Independence! No wonder they say we have no German "Kultur." If we could only make our "Kultur" twist any resemblance in all that which led up to that which led up to and culminated in the "Kultur" tongues we could turn crowbars into corkscrews.

What, with "our Kaiser" in New York and our gentle war lords in Colorado, we should all pray "God save our country!"

A. W. HARRINGTON

Stockbridge, Mass., Feb. 17, 1915.

GERMANY'S FOOD GRABBING

America Expected to Supply the Deficiency.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: Germany is certainly controlled by a shrewd and clever set of war lords. Her soldiers reaped all the harvests in Belgium and seized all foodstuffs for her armies, leaving all the starving civilians to be fed by England and America.

This scheme worked pretty well, and now Germany has seized all the foodstuffs in her own territory for the army and expects America to feed her civilians while they are raising new crops, building new Zeppelins and submarines or making more cannon and new war material with which to annihilate the British. And some of our pro-German citizens seem to think that if we do not accommodate them we will be guilty of murder, and if England prevents us she violates all laws of civilization.

Philadelphia, Feb. 19, 1915.

THE HEREDITARY HYPHEN

It Seems to Take Some Generations to Make an American of a German.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: Under this column stated that there were only 2,500,000 German-Americans in this country according to the last census for 1910.

This may be true perhaps as far as the German born elements are considered, but do you think the German-Americans born in the United States are grasshoppers?

I myself have five sons born in America, and they are voting with their father against the Bryan-Wilson administration in 1914.

Don't you think now there are at least 1,000,000 or 8,000,000 of German-Americans in the United States?

O. SINGER.

Brooklyn, Feb. 18, 1915.

Lines for a Picture.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: Mr. Weed certainly hit the mark in the cartoon "The Boy Stood on the Burning Deck." But why not finish the verse?

"The boy stood on the burning deck," "Thinking of dear 'old Princeton,'" "When something struck him in the neck,

And his name was Woodrow Wilson.

I do not claim to be as good a poet as Mr. Weed is a cartoonist—in fact, I am as a poet about as rotten as the ship "Purchase," but the above "classic" was in my system and I had to get it out.

DAILY READER.

Albany, Feb. 14, 1915.

POLISH RELIEF IMPARTIAL

No Partisanship in Its Benevolent Activities.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: It was yesterday brought to the attention of the American Polish Relief Committee of New York that the statement was being made and circulated that the committee was not non-partisan in its activities on behalf of non-combatants in Poland. As is now pretty generally understood, the suffering old people and women and children of Polish nationality are under three flags, Austrian, German and Russian. Their homes have been destroyed and their lands devastated by all three armies with impartiality. Their fighting men are enlisted in all three armies, and their sufferings are caused by the military operations of some one of the three nations named, depending upon where they happen to live. Sometimes the same territory has been captured and recaptured more than once, and the destruction is complete.

In justice to the committee, I have been unanimously requested by more than a quorum present at a meeting duly called and held to ask you to state the facts in the case.

The committee is a continuation and an enlargement, under its new name of the National Polish Relief Committee, and it has been working in close association with the American Polish Relief Committee of Boston, of which the Hon. Curtis Guild is president. When the New York committee first met, on December 29, 1914, it adopted the following resolution:

"The American Polish Relief Committee of New York is organized for the relief of Polish non-combatants within the eastern theatre of war. The work is non-partisan and non-sectarian, and the endeavor will be to forward money and supplies from time to time to such committees or agencies in Poland as will best insure a proper distribution accordingly."

Up to January 1 it had forwarded twenty-one cases of clothing (principally for women and children) to Warsaw. On that date it was informed that the Boston committee had sent \$2,500 to Warsaw, and it then transmitted, from the funds in the hands of its treasurer, the Guaranty Trust Company, of this city, the sum of \$2,500 to Dr. Leopold Ritter von Jaworski, of Vienna, through Ambassador Penfield, for distribution to the suffering Poles in Galicia. On January 29 it forwarded through the same channels to the same destination another \$2,500. On February 10 it forwarded, via Petrograd, the sum of \$5,000 to the central Citizens' Relief Committee of Warsaw, \$2,500 of which was to be distributed in Warsaw and the remaining \$2,500 in Lemberg, in Galicia. It should be noted that Warsaw is in Russia and Galicia in Austria. A further \$2,500 has since been sent to Dr. von Jaworski, through Ambassador Penfield, for distribution in Galicia, and six cases of clothing, containing 1,592 finished garments for women and children, in view of the Boston committee's additional transfers to Warsaw. Twenty-five more cases of clothing (including nineteen cases donated by the American Red Cross) have been forwarded recently through the Red Cross to the United States Consul at Genoa, with

the request that he forward the same to a committee in Vienna which is looking after Polish refugees, and 150 cases of clothing from the Red Cross have been accepted by the Russian Ambassador to be forwarded by the first available ship of the Russian-American Line to the chairman of the Warsaw Central Citizens' Relief Committee. These contributions of money and clothing have been sent in answer to the most urgent appeals made by well known Poles in Russian Poland and Galicia. No appeals have been received as yet from Poles in German Poland, and, therefore, no assistance has been forwarded to that district. It should be apparent, however, from the composition of the committee and the resolution which it has adopted and has adhered to and the manner in which its assistance has thus far been distributed, that it is absolutely non-partisan and has not restricted its assistance to the Poles under any particular flag, but is answering as fast as it can the appeals which have come to it. All that it needs is more money and more clothing in order to mitigate the suffering of these Polish non-combatants wherever they may be.

HERBERT L. SATTERLEE.

New York, Feb. 19, 1915.

THE LABORER AND HIS HIRE

Three Meals and Six Bits Quite Infra Dig.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: Referring to your issue of today, I should think that Mr. John Freeman would be ashamed to have his name appear in your paper as offering three meals and 75 cents a day to a man for cleaning up his cellar.

Could Mr. Freeman live on three meals a day and 75 cents? No wonder the man threatened to punch Mr. Freeman's face for the insult. Just think of it, 75 cents a day! Had Mr. Freeman offered the man \$3 a day he would gladly have taken it. But to have accepted 75 cents a day, he would have lost his manhood.

J. J. MUNSON.

Port Chester, N. Y., Feb. 18, 1915.

GERMANY'S LAWLESS THREATS

Are American Ships in Danger?

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: It is interesting to note that Italy has protested as vigorously against Germany's determination to risk the destruction of neutral ships as we have done, and for precisely the same reason. Neutral countries have nothing to do with the provocation that England has given to Germany. One belligerent has a right to retaliate upon another or upon her allies, but there her rights cease. Had England violated any number of international laws Germany's obligations toward neutrals would remain the same. Their ships may not be attacked until their cargoes have been examined, nor destroyed unless the cargo is contraband, and even then not until provision has been made for saving passengers and crew.

It is humiliating that Germany should consider us so ignorant of international law as her communications imply. If the effective use of submarines allows no time for examination before destruction their use must be abandoned.

Germany desires the obloquy of the civilized world as little as any other nation, and, therefore, we may be sure that when it comes to the point she will find a way to confine her vengeance to her foes instead of wreaking it upon the United States.

M. I. DAVIS.

New York, Feb. 19, 1915.

A LESSON FROM HENRY IV

Which Might or Might Not Prove Effective To-day.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: If Henry IV of France had carried out his plan the war now on in Europe would not have occurred. See Thomas Paine's "Rights of Man." "It is attributed to Henry IV of France, a man of an enlarged and benevolent heart, that he proposed about the year 1620 a plan for abolishing war in Europe. The plan consisted in constituting a European congress, or as the French authors style it, a pacific republic; by appointing delegates from several nations who were to act as a board of arbitration in any disputes that might arise between nations and nations. Had such a plan been adopted at the time it was proposed, the taxes of England and France, as two of the parties, would have been at least ten million sterling annually to each nation less than they were at the commencement of the French Revolution."

Possibly the peoples of Europe at the close of the present conflict may act on the suggestion of Henry IV of France. If they love mankind as much as Thomas Paine did, who said, "The world is my country; to do good my religion," they will.

J. A. BUTLER.

New York, Feb. 19, 1915.

Justice to Shoppers.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: Thank you for to-day's editorial on the shoptalk. It is just what they would like said for them.

BELLE V. CUSHMAN.

(Once one of the number.)

The Love of Being Fooled.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: Your article by Mr. Adams recalls to memory a well known saying of past times of the celebrated F. J. Barnum, that Americans like to be humbugged; and Mr. Adams proves that to be the case to-day.

ONE OF THE "FOOLS WE MOD."

TALS BE.

Coney Island, Feb. 19, 1915.

The Policy of Progress.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: Accept my hearty appreciation of your suffrage editorial and cartoon. A number of women have already given up their subscriptions to newspapers that are editorially opposing women's movement, and I feel sure that many of them will at once take The Tribune instead. I hope to reprint parts of your editorial and the cartoon in "The Woman Voter," which is consistent with the progressive policy which you have adopted in many other matters. The Tribune will undoubtedly be the paper which believers in democracy will want to support.

FLORENCE WOOLSTON.

Editor of "The Woman Voter," New York, Feb. 12, 1915.

Hyphenated, Perhaps.

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: At the Hudson Theatre to-day (Lincoln's Birthday) the orchestra played "The Star-Spangled Banner," and at least three-quarters of the people in the audience arose. Can you explain why the other quarter remained seated? Surely this country stands for something worth while for them, or they could not afford to attend the theatre during a season of proclaimed mourning. Why don't the programmes print a request for the people to stand up and show their patriotism? Is not our country "real" enough to be considered as well as individual?

E. L. R.